

VIETNAM COURIER

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7th Year



Hydraulic works under way in Hua Lung district, Lang Son province.

South Viet Nam

○ IN ONE NIGHT (JAN. 3) 6 SUB-SECTOR CPs AND 70 MILITARY POSTS IN MY THO PROVINCE STORMED.

○ In Breaches of the Christmas Truce, 4 Puppet Companies Wiped Out or Decimated in Tay Ninh and Tra Vinh Provinces.

○ More Than 160 Enemy Troops Knocked Out in Saigon and Peri- phery.

○ PLAF Attacks Stepped Up in Da Nang Region since January 6.

NIXON'S FIRST YEAR IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND VIET NAM

On January 20, 1969, the Nixon administration took over from the Johnson team at the White House. Since 1968 the Viet Nam war had entered a new phase, that of the general offensives and uprisings of South Vietnamese patriotic forces. It was generally felt in the United States that an American victory was no longer possible and that the war was becoming a real cause that eroded American prestige, economy and social fabric of the country and its international position as well. A shrewd politician, Nixon had won the presidential elections with a pledge to quickly end the costly and unpopular

war and to shape the new military strategy initiated by the previous administration. This strategy, which made an intensive use of tanks, armored vehicles, helicopters and artillery, was undeniably defensive with numerous belts of defence in depth around US puppet military bases. A basic official policy called "Vietnamization" — another name for Johnson's "de-escalation" — was also elaborated.

Thus, instead of terminating the war as he had promised, Nixon merely wanted to prolong it by other means. That was only "to change the color of the conflict", as his Ambassador to Saigon, Ellsworth Bunker put it. Speaking of "Vietnamization", Walter Lippmann wrote, "The theory of the strategy is that a long occupation using some 200,000 support troops and the artillery and the Air Force, can be more acceptable to the American people. The official strategy is addressed not to negotiating with our

adversaries but to placating American opinion" (*Newswatch*, Dec. 1, 1968).

A program of "accelerated pacification" was also launched, which now broached aside demagogic measures to go straight to its goals: impounding of villages, creation of "white zones", leveling of ground- root VC structures, all this by means of most brutal methods, which naturally led to such naturalias of crime as in Ba Lang An, Krong H'Rinh, etc.

Nixon's new policy yielded, however, not very promising results. The defense belt considered by US leaders invulnerable could not protect enemy bases from South Vietnamese patriots' continued onslaughts. According to still incomplete statistics, the most difficult bases were dealt precisely at US armouries: in the first nine months of 1969 alone, 7,450 tanks and armoured vehicles were destroyed (against 7,000 for the whole

"VIETNAMIZATION" OFF TO AN UNPROMISING ING START

HOWEVER, once elected President, he acted very differently, and his Defence Secretary Melvin Laird, back from a Viet Nam tour, lick-

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Spring Sown Rice:

A NEW ELEMENT IN NORTH V. NAM
FOOD CROP CULTIVATION

Agronomist BUI HUY DAP
Director, Agronomic Institute

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OUR CONSTITUTION IS 10 YEARS OLD

Ten years ago, on January 1, 1960, our people enthusiastically acclaimed the promulgation of the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. This constitution replaced the first one adopted by the first legislature of the National Assembly on September 9, 1946. It was drafted by a Committee headed by our great leader, President Ho Chi Minh.

Showing due regard to the whole nation's welfare, the 1960 Constitution is a progressive, new Constitution as a comprehensive program; it is the fundamental law of the State, and an efficient weapon in the hands of our people in the present stage of their revolution.

It makes it clear that "the territory of Viet Nam is a single, indivisible whole from North to South" and that "the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, established and consolidated as a result of the Vietnamese people's achievements in the glorious August Revolution and the heroic Resistance, is the people's democratic State. All the nationalities living in Vietnamese territory are equal in rights and in obligations. The State has the duty not only to maintain and strengthen solidarity between various nationalities, but also to help minorities, especially the rapidly attain the national economic and cultural level. Our State is a people's democratic State based on the worker-peasant alliance headed by the working class. All power in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam belongs to the people. The National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels and the other organs of State put into practice democratic centralism."

The Constitution also underscores that "the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, under the leadership of the party, have the duty to defend the gains of the revolution, to safeguard the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the Fatherland and to defend the freedom, happiness and peaceful labour of the people."

Concerning the building and development of our regime, the Constitution stipulates: "The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is progressing step by step from people's democracy to socialism by developing and transforming the national economy along socialist lines, turning its backward economy into a socialist economy with a modern industry and agriculture, and advanced science and technology."

Two years have elapsed since the coming into force of the Constitution and the Vietnamese Revolution has not deflected from the course charted therein.

Following the line of the 3rd National Congress of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, our Party cadres and members and our whole people have achieved substantial achievements in all fields.

Completing socialist transformation and pushing up the building of socialism, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has been making steady progress.

The people's democratic State, which assumes the historic task of proletarian dictatorship has enabled each citizen to enjoy his right as a collective master of the society and to give every day further proofs of his sense of responsibility such as:

The US imperialists waged, for four years running and with most diabolical methods, an atrocious war of destruction on the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, but far from improving the image of our outstanding virtues in the eyes of the whole world. With the strength of its regime and the Party's sound policy, North Viet Nam has defeated all manoeuvres and destructive acts of the American aggressors and brilliantly fulfilled its obligations as the Great Rear-Base towards the Great Frontline, while continuing its steady march towards socialism.

The US imperialists, who are still mounting their command in Saigon to exert "maximum military pressure" that is, to intensify to the maximum their aerial sweeps and air and artillery bombardments against the liberated areas of South Viet Nam. The number of the battalion-size or larger-scale attacks under the Nixon administration has doubled that under the Johnson administration, the number of bombardments and toxic chemical sprayings has also increased considerably. In

clinging to its aggressive position, setting its face against all sensible, conciliatory, reasonable and logical proposals made by the DRVN Government Delegation and the RSVN PRG Delegation, repeating its absurd claim for "mainly a troop withdrawal", asking for a priori the cessation of the US aggression, and obstinately maintaining in office the dictatorial, warlike and rotten Thieu-Ky-Khieu administration in spite of the legitimate demand of the entire South Vietnamese people that this puppet administration be removed.

Since the Nixon administration has not reached its "negotiation from strength" objective, recently it has laid emphasis on the policy of "Vietnamization of the war" and regarded as secondary the search for a negotiated settlement of the Viet Nam problem. The DRVN says that the Nixon administration has practically downgraded the Conference so as to eventually thwart the search of a negotiated settlement of the war.

He concluded: "The Delegation of the DRVN Government thinks it necessary to continue to vigorously denounce these dark schemes of the Nixon administration to world public opinion and to the American people. Once again it declares that if the Nixon administration persistently does not listen to reason, stubbornly pursues its policy of aggression in Viet Nam, and refuses to engage in serious negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the Viet Nam problem with due regard for the Vietnamese people's fundamental right and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, then the Vietnamese people will have to keep up unswervingly their just fight till they achieve a real independence and peace."

— Mangrove bushes have been destroyed along streams where the Vietnamese people get much of their fish supply. It will take an estimated 25 years for these to grow again.

— Soil erosion takes place where plants have been destroyed.

— An "irreversible conversion to a bricklike mass" takes place on soils where

(Continued page 7)

U.S. PUPPET CRIMES

A MARTYR VILLAGE SOUTH OF DMZ

On May 18, 1967 a big sweep was mounted against Trung Hai commune, by 15 enemy battalions to turn it into a no man's land. Thousands of dwellings were set afire, a great number of domestic animals killed, and hundreds of hectares of cropland devastated by toxic chemicals. The inhabitants were ordered off to a concentration camp. As they stubbornly resisted, they were subjected to heavy bombardments. Since early October 1967, shells of various calibers have been indiscriminately fired on the village on a round-the-clock basis, destroying everything: houses, fields and roads. Aircraft of various types harassed them with explosive and time-bombs. Sometimes a target was hit many times in one

day until it was erased from the map.

In 1968, 1,100 tons of bombs were released on the village in 66 B-52 sorties, 1,300 bombs were dumped on it in 80 co-ordinates-reading bombings and over 2,000 bombs in 75 dive-bombing raids by other aircraft. More odious still, US planes dropped about one hundred time-bombs along the Ben Hai river and other communication lines to hamper the movement of the population and upset their daily activities.

In the first half of 1966, according to still incomplete figures, over 10,000 bombs of various sizes were poured on the village, razing everything and causing 245 casualties among the inhabitants.

US CHEMICAL WARFARE IN SOUTH VIET NAM

(As seen by American scientists)

In a symposium on chemical and biological warfare held by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston, many American scientists came out strongly against the US administration's using toxic chemicals in South Viet Nam causing heavy losses to the local population. AP reported:

Dr. Arthur W. Galston, Professor of Biology at Yale University, outlined some of the harmful effects found to be caused by toxic chemicals used in South Viet Nam. They included:

— Mangrove bushes have been destroyed along streams where the Vietnamese people get much of their fish supply. It will take an estimated 25 years for these to grow again.

— Soil erosion takes place where plants have been destroyed.

Spring-Sown Rice: A New Element in North Viet Nam Food Crop Cultivation

Agronomist BUI HUY DAP
Director, Agronomic Institute

At the 49th session of the Paris Conference, Ambassador Ha Van Lau on behalf of the DRVN Government delegation, denounced the "negotiating from strength" policy advocated by the Nixon administration and its "Vietnamization of the war" strategy as attempts to achieve US aggressive goal, impose US neo-colonialism on South Viet Nam and perpetuate the division of Viet Nam on December 22.

It is precisely due to the US policy of "negotiating from strength" that Mr. Ha Van Lau pointed out, that at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam, the US delegates showed neither goodwill nor seriousness, thus preventing the Conference from settling any question after nearly one year of work. He denounced the US for

the recent years.

Over the past years, studies have been made on spring-sown rice, in various fields: plant physiology, tillage, plant diseases, agricultural botany, agricultural implements and machinery, agricultural economy...

This exhaustive research along with cultivation on ever-larger areas has thrown light on the advantages of spring-sown rice, its capacities of higher productivity and the vistas it will open as a main crop, as well as its prospective vigorous expansion in North Viet Nam's present agricultural pattern: summer rice crop by a shorter-term spring-sown rice crop, then before replanting spring rice we can raise a crop of green manure in the flooded fields (*azolla pinnata*).

Spring-sown rice has accounted for very high yields—especially with the current "dwarf" variety—as compared with summer rice. With enough water, manure, a timely sowing and adequate farming techniques, we can easily obtain 4–5 tons/hectare per crop over a wide area. With intensified techniques of high farming, we shall be able

to nearly catch up with our Northern neighbours (Japan, Northern China). Recently, in Nghi An, an experiment has been made to this effect and has chalked up more than 10 tons/hectare per year.

The introduction of spring-sown rice enables us to map out new directions for raising more promising than the old pattern: summer rice—autumn rice. If we replace the long-term summer rice crop by a shorter-term spring-sown rice crop, then before replanting spring rice we can raise a crop of green manure in the flooded fields (*azolla pinnata*).

Spring-sown rice has accounted for very high yields—especially with the current "dwarf" variety—as compared with summer rice. With enough water, manure, a timely sowing and adequate farming techniques, we can easily obtain 4–5 tons/hectare per crop over a wide area. With intensified techniques of high farming, we shall be able

labour and achieve higher productivity than with former summer rice farming.

All these new possibilities point to the revolutionary advance represented by the introduction of spring-sown rice. This does not mean only a change of rice species or application of a few improved farming techniques, but a revolution in the production and working habits of the peasant masses.

Cultivation of spring-sown rice on ever larger areas in many localities has shown that it has contributed to higher production and bids fair to replace summer rice in North Viet Nam in most of the areas grown with winter-spring rice. We can also grow such winter subsidiary crops as vegetables, potatoes, sweet potatoes before replanting spring-sown rice. Still we can plant a crop of *sebanica canabis* by intercropping with a spring-sown rice crop to produce food for the autumn rice crop. By alternating *azolla pinnata*—spring-sown rice + *sebanica canabis* + autumn rice, we have obtained from 8 to 10 tons of paddy/hectare per year with a relatively low production cost and a fairly high labour productivity.

The rotation: winter subsidiary crops + spring-sown rice + *sebanica canabis* + early autumn rice has been responsible for rather high output (5–6 tons/hectare per year plus a sizeable amount of subsidiary crops, particularly with a crop of potatoes before spring-sown rice. One can also get a number of short-term industrial crops in rotation with spring-sown rice in the mountains as well as in the plains.

With the pattern thus set for spring-sown rice, with draught power and manpower more judiciously used, one can lighten the peasants'



Preparations for Winter 1969-Spring 1970 cultivations at Tan Phu cooperative (Thach Ha district, Ha Tinh province).

year of 1968), and 6,000 aircraft, mostly choppers, were downed (against 6,000 for the whole year of 1967). As for the total of US casualties, USIS, on Sept. 26, 1969, quoted the *Journal of American Forces* as recognizing that it had increased by 50% during the first 6 months under Nixon as compared with the last 6 months under Johnson. The reduction of US losses to a level "acceptable" to the average American, a major objective of the new President, did not come to pass and this explained in part the new waves of anti-war protests in the United States in the last months of 1969.

What of the programme of replacement of US troops by puppet troops? It turned out a pipe dream in its process of realization. Though profusely equipped with up-to-date weapons, the puppet army could only make a poor show. Its losses were the heaviest right in the experimentation zone of

comes to a conclusion regardless of what happens at the negotiating table. It will come to a conclusion as a result of the plan that we have instituted on which we are embarked for replacing American troops with Vietnamese troops" (Nov. 21, 1969 press conference).

As early as January 1969, when Kissinger published in *Foreign Affairs* his article on the Viet Nam negotiations, the public was informed of the lack of enthusiasm with which the new US administration was coming to the quadrupartite Conference in Paris. Nixon's adviser suggested instead two parallel negotiations: one between Hanoi and the US on military problems (so as to get across the absurd contention of an "invasion of South Viet Nam by the North Vietnamese") and the other between Saigon and the NFL (so as to legalize the Saigon puppet administration). This US thesis of a two-track negotiation was put forth at the Paris Conference in March and April 1969.

Meanwhile, the Nixon administra-

tion withdrawal" of the bulk of American and "other non-South Vietnamese" troops within 6 months, following which American troops would move into designated base areas to wait for the complete withdrawal of "other non-South Vietnamese troops".

As public pressure was continually mounting in the United States for a rapid return of the American Expeditionary Corps, Nixon made on June 8, 1969 a new move by announcing a cutback of 35,000 GIs. This was an announcement that helped to reduce tension in the following months. Observers immediately remarked that with these withdrawals by dribs and drabs at the tempo of 10,000 per month, American troops would still have to stay in Viet Nam for many years to come, if really Nixon wanted to bring them all out. But in his speech to the US president's intention, as in his Nov. 1969 speech, he reassured his firm resolve to continue the war through "Vietnamization", that is

To such a "government", Nixon wanted to entrust the organizing of general elections which are to enable the South Vietnamese people to decide freely their own future. As a matter of fact, he completely approved of the 6 points of the Paris Conference on July 27, 1968, which moreover stated that the NFL was allowed to take part in the elections if it agreed to "renounce the use of force", that is to lay down its weapons. Mention should also be made of the commitment to Nixon's 8-point programme, general elections would be held in the period following the withdrawal of the greater part of American troops, which means under the continued occupation of South Viet Nam by some 200,000 GIs.

Such was the Nixonian way of allowing the South Vietnamese to exercise their right to self-determination. It seemed safe enough for the neo-colonialists, and for the US President, to undertake that he was prepared to accept any regime resulting from South Viet Nam elections.

...

by using American troops as support for a puppet army befooled up, trained and equipped by the Pentagon.

To any sensible observers it is clear that to settle the Viet Nam issue, the first step is to withdraw US troops of aggression from South Viet Nam to provide facilities for the South Vietnamese people to exercise their right to self-determination through free and democratic general elections. Nixon's representatives in Paris have been systematically refusing to discuss such a withdrawal.

ALL MEANS ARE FAIR TO AVOID A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL AGGRESSIVE TROOPS

the "Vietnamization" programme, especially in the High Plateaux and the Mekong Delta and deserves rate among them rose to the startling figure of 10,000 per month, according to US official source.

As far as "accelerated pacification" is concerned, it proved to be a completely futile effort. 1969 supplied a confirmation of this prediction of presidential adviser Henry Kissinger: "The consolidation of (South Viet Nam puppet-) US government" (which was already "under way, perhaps indefinitely" by the *Tet offensive*). *And US News and World Report* admitted in its Oct. 27, 1969 issue that basic organizations of the "Viet Cong" were more powerful than ever in 1969.

LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR FOUR-SIDED NEGOTIATIONS

At the Paris negotiations they began by raising a series of so-called "concrete" questions, such as withdrawal from South Viet Nam of "non-South Vietnamese troops", restoration of the DMZ, the problem of POWs, that of Laos and that of Cambodia, etc. All these were manoeuvres to distract public opinion from the central issue: withdrawal of US aggressor troops.

Then, seeing that he could not dodge it indefinitely, Nixon laid down on March 14, 1969 three conditions for an American troop pull-out: the progress of the puppet army, that of the Paris Conference and that of the PLAF activities in South Viet Nam. All this was tantamount to postponing *sine die* the repatriation of American troops.

On the other hand, still nurturing illusions on the capabilities of its new policy, the White House has been working with a total victory in prospect, although by less spectacular methods. (*The Observer*, Nov. 9, quoted by Philippe Devillers in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1969 issue). That is what one can read into the following words of President Nixon: "The Viet Nam war will

withstand" of the bulk of American and "other non-South Vietnamese" troops within 6 months, following which American troops would move into designated base areas to wait for the complete withdrawal of "other non-South Vietnamese troops".

With his prolonged refusal to nominate a successor to Cabot Lodge at the head of the American Delegation, Nixon seems no longer anxious to conceal his indifference to the Paris Conference. Indeed, he feels very little interest in a negotiated settlement of the Viet Nam problem. This has been made clear by himself.

Nixon wants a settlement by force of arms? Does he believe sincerely that the return to a new kind of "special war" improved by the addition of an ultramodern weaponry given to the puppet army and a large contingent of US support troops would bring his neo-colonialist venture to a happy ending?

The US President should not forget that South Vietnamese patriots had defeated the puppet army in 1961-1965 and then held at bay the American and the American Expeditionary Corps armed to the teeth in the years 1968-1969. It is crystal clear that the association of a demoralized puppet army and a badly mauled American Expeditionary Corps will not result in victory for the rulers in Washington.

The resistance war against US aggression may drag on. Our compatriots may have to make heavy sacrifices in property and life. Whatever may happen, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the US aggressors till total victory.

The ultimate wish of President Ho Chi Minh will be fulfilled by a whole nation who already hold in their hands the key to final victory.

The most common procedure

NIXON'S FIRST YEAR IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND VIET NAM

by using American troops as support for the puppet army befooled up, trained and equipped by the Pentagon.

The above successive stands taken by Nixon on US troop withdrawal show why after a year of negotiations the Paris Conference did not make a single step forward. Walter Lippmann, in the already quoted article, wrote that "the Paris negotiations have not even begun because the American rulers" have not in fact taken the crucial decision about ending the war", i.e. the decision relating to the total withdrawal of American troops.

NIXON'S CONCEPTION OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

In such conditions, how could the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination be guaranteed? Nixon likes to repeat that "what the United States wants for South Viet Nam is not the important thing, what North Viet Nam wants for South Viet Nam is not the important thing, what is important is what the people of South Viet Nam want for themselves" (May 14, 1969 speech). On Sept. 26, 1969, he reassured that there could be no negotiation about the right of South Vietnamese people to freely choose their own leaders, without external pressure, American or other. However, all "governments" in South Viet Nam since 1954 have been created of US intervention and aggression and have been able to survive only thanks to US dollars and weapons. These "governments" have only

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The most common procedure

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Thieu-Ky Dictatorial Regime Revealed by American Study Team

(Concluded)

TORTURE

A disturbing aspect of the Viet Nam situation is the physical abuse of prisoners. Frequently, the interrogation center at the National Police Headquarters in Saigon was mentioned as a scene of torture. However, US informants said that the types and extent of torture ministered in some of the detention centers in the provinces were far worse than in the National Police Interrogation center in Saigon. Although Team members were allowed to visit the National Police Headquarters in Saigon, it was an arranged visit.

An intellectual who was arrested in 1966 and spent the first six months of his term in prison, and if he were to be interrogated again, described what he called the "typical case" of a woman law student in the nearby cell... Throughout this year, he was tortured daily by beating. When she was finally called before a tribunal to hear the charge, she had to be carried by two fellow prisoners...

The same informant said, as number of others did, that sexual torture was common. Frequently coke and beer bottles were prodded into the vagina. Also, there were a number of accounts of electrical wires applied to the genitals of males and females, as well as to other sensitive parts of the body. Another informant told of the torture by electricity of an eight-year old girl for the purpose of finding her loved-one has disappeared...

The Study Team has reached the conclusion that Thieu's regime has, through the extensive and increasing use of the extra-constitutional Military Field Courts, imprisoned thousands of persons without the most fundamental rights, a hair bearing and, in a shocking number of instances, without even apprising the imprisoned persons of the charges against them.

The Independent Study Team on Religious and Political Freedom in Viet Nam has completed its third year and is preparing a detailed report. The Team met with South Vietnamese officials and United States officials, various Buddhist and Roman Catholic leaders, representatives of their principal sects, members of the National Assembly, attorneys and other specialists in jurisprudence as well as numerous private individuals, including some prisoners.

The Team inspected prisons in Saigon, Thu Duc and Son Con. Our final report will be related to the following firm impressions. Religious and political oppression is widespread. Speaking for peace or in any other way opposing the Government easily brings the charge of sedition and subversive activities. Long detention without trial is frequently the result.

The number of political prisoners continues to increase. There must be no illusion that this climate of political and religious suppression is compatible with either a representative or stable government.

In fact, procedural protections are completely nonexistent at the arrest and interrogation stage. Arrests are made by a wide variety of local and national officials — by district police, special security forces, military forces, etc. — each exercising a relatively unfettered discretion. The arrest may

"As soon as the Saigon polyclinic has advertised that anyone who 'donates' blood receives in return a brand-new 500-piastre note, every day from 40 to 50 people crowded into the place. What a pitiful sight, those skin and bones, all bent over for their turn! I also met many soldiers of all branches and services in the armed forces. They all looked weary, haggard, their unbroken faces faced the same colour as death. They sat there leaning against the wall, waiting for their turn, too. Here are some fragments of conversation I gleaned:

"My kid has been sick for the past couple of days. Without those 500 piastres, he would have to go without medicine."

"Merciful Buddha in the heavens, help me sell my blood today. There's not a grain of rice left at home!"

"Good Jehovah, will you be kind enough to let me go in first? My wife has a difficult disease. I fear she won't pull through without these 500 piastres. Please, let me go in first!"

"Probably few know that this is a routine occurrence at the Saigon hospital near the Ben Thanh market."

The above excerpt comes from a short report appearing in the Saigon paper *Tin Sau* (*Morning News*) on December 5, 1969. And here is another story carried by the daily *Chieu Luu* (*Right Opinion*) on November 5, 1969:

"At 10 o'clock (Nov. 4) a large delegation gathered at Maxim's, Tu Do Street, Saigon, from various countries. The guests were also treated to European delicacies with first-quality Whisky and Martell. The gala was sponsored by Madame Nguyen Van Thieu, First Lady of the Republic of Viet Nam.

Review of Saigon Press

About the Saigon Junta's "Austerity Programme"

Also present were the Prime Minister and Madame Tran Thien Khiem, the Honourable Speakers of the Senate and the Lower Chamber, a number of ministers and other high officials. The press was also invited, at the uniform price of 5,000 piastres a plate. However, there was an unmistakable sense of hierarchy in the placement of the guests: there were the first and second class messes in line with the military tradition of the Vietnamese communal life; then there were the press tables near the bar. According to the indications on the invitation card, President Nguyen Van Thieu was scheduled to come and preside over the gala, but at the last moment only Mme Thieu turned up.

It should be noted that Maxim's is one of the platiest and costliest restaurants in Saigon at present. Except for the European dishes, the Whisky and Martell and the songs and dances, nothing particular happened at the gala.

Along with reports on these two diametrically opposite happenings, the Saigon press has been reporting on the various deals with onerous conditions in bringing to light the shady money deals of the big wigs in the city. According to the press, in a crack-down on contraband gold, a representative was unfortunate enough to be found in possession of 250 taels of "illegal" gold turned up.

"Each tael of gold at the present rate fetching at least 14,000 piastres, how much will 250 taels make?" Cong Luu queried on December 6, 1969. The paper added: "It's as if our readers will not be able to believe it is real gold. But then, when he has been the offender, the same paper on December 9 makes known that thanks to the austerity taxes levied on luxury goods — Ed. — a senator one day woke up to find himself richer by sixty or seventy million piastres with the sale of iron of every size and every form."

The press has also disclosed that 150 men of importance had evaded income taxes on nearly 30 billion piastres and that the Minister of Finance, Tran Van Dung, the Minister of the Interior, Tran Van Thanh, and the Senator Tran Dang Dinh, the Chairman of the Budget Committee, received 51,301 piastres in 1968 and 94,505 piastres in 1969, for his car repairs alone." Another Representative squandered 17,035 piastres of the public fund on phone calls. The paper Tien Phuoc (*Frontier*) went to Bao Lieu to interview the representative. He had been damaged by the "austerity" taxes. The reconstruction cost 94,111 piastres in 1968 and 35,314 piastres in 1969. Most recently, the car was again put back in order for 90,000 piastres."

(Continued page 7)

5th Founding Anniversary of Thailand Patriotic Front

NEW SUCCESS OF THAILAND'S PATRIOTIC ANTI-US MOVEMENT

FIVE years ago, on Jan. 1, 1965, the Thailand Patriotic Front was set up, marking an important advance in the Thai people's movement against US imperialists and their lackeys. Since then, from the cities to the rural areas, from the mountains to the deltas, it has been going on without interruption and in different forms. True, the wars of the people have taken part in hundred of strikes for better living conditions. Many walk-outs have erupted right at US military bases. Hundreds of thousands of workers have gone out against exploitation by the US imperialists and their lackeys for enlargement of military bases. National democratic feelings have become more ardent among university and college students and progressive intellectuals.

The patriotic gunfire, first heard in August 1965 in the northeastern uplands, has spread to many parts of the country. According to the *Voice of the People of Thailand* Radio, in four years ending in Aug. 1969, the Thai patriotic armed forces had won 2,000 battles, killing or wounding 4,000 adverse troops, including a number of US aggressors, shooting down or destroying 51 aircraft, downing 100 anti-aircraft guns and wrecking dozens of military vehicles. In addition, they duly punished 900 reactionaries who owed blood debts to the people.

In January 1969, the Command of the Thailand Patriotic Armed Army was set up, spelling out the tasks of the patriotic armed forces. At present the people's armed struggle is involving 140 districts of 33 provinces. In 1969, in southern Thailand alone, it extended to more than 10 districts of 8 provinces, striking alarm into

the hearts of reactionary rulers. In December 1969, the latter had to proclaim martial law in those 8 provinces and muster thousands of troops, including many imperialists, aircraft and artillery, against the guerrillas. In the north-eastern region, the Liberation Army has been very active. It has fought hundreds of engagements, shooting off many enemy raids and wiping out a large amount of enemy man-power. On July 28, 1969, a few hours before Nixon arrived in Bangkok, the patriotic armed forces in the north-eastern region attacked Ubon air base, one of the 6 biggest US air bases in Thailand, blasting down 2 radar stations. In the North, the Liberation Army has also stepped up its operations.

In 1969 alongside the actions of patriotic fighters, political and economic drives gained momentum among workers, peasants and other strata of the people. In the first half of 1969, more than 13,000 workers staged strikes and other actions against oppression and exploitation by the US imperialists and the Thamom clique. In the same period, more than 6,000 students and college students 7 times held school strikes or demonstrations in protest against the deprived educational system imposed by the US imperialists and their lackeys.

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207 US AIRCRAFT DOWNED IN 1969

1969 saw an unprecedented stepping up of US air raids on the country of Laos but also the beginning of losses in US aircraft since the beginning of US bombings in May 1964, KPI Agency added.

With small arms, the patriots downed from January 1 to December 1969 110 US planes, representing 6 per cent of the total of US planes lost in the same period.

KPI Agency recalled that since May 17, 1964 the US imperialists had lost 1,180 aircraft in Laos.

The US imperialists lost

ASIAN - AFRICAN - LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY MEETING

On the evening of Jan. 7, the Viet Nam Committee of Solidarity held a meeting in Hanoi in observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Struggle for National Liberation of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Jan. 3-10, 1970).

It was attended by Mme Nguyen Thi Lai, Hoang Bac, Vice Chairman of the Committee; Phan Lac Tuyen, member of the Special Representation of the RSVN in the DRVN; and representatives of various public services and mass organisations of the

Asian, African and Latin American peoples. The Vietnamese people, firmly supporting their militant solidarity and their full support for the effort of the tri-continental peoples always standing by their side, the Vietnamese people firmly convinced that the revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America closely united in their tenacious and persistent struggle, will infallibly win final victory. With President Ho Chi Minh's leadership in their minds, the Vietnamese people will never waver in their resolve to completely defeat the US aggressors, to defend the North, to liberate the South and eventually achieve the peaceful reunification of the country, thereby making a worthy contribution to the revolution in the 3 continents in multiple and varied forms.

After the opening speech by Mme Nguyen Thi Lai, Hoang Bac, Assistant Secretary-General of the Committee, took the floor. He praised the great successes of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in their fight against US-led imperialism and colonialism. He pointed to the revolutionary tide now surging in the 3 continents in multiple and varied forms.

He strongly condemned the US imperialists and their lackeys' perfidious, perfidious and vicious attempts to stamp out the popular revolutionary movement in many countries. He stressed that the imperialists would never succeed in turning back the world revolution and in escaping bitter failure, however obstinate and wicked they might be.

The audience unanimously passed a resolution calling for unqualified support for the movement of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America against US-led imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, for national independence, social progress and world peace.

VIET NAM COURIER

TO THE READER
We are aware that there is much room for improvement in the working of our paper. We apologize for this shortcoming and highly appreciate all your suggestions as they will help us to serve you more efficiently in future.

VIET NAM COURIER

VI



A PLAF unit on the march

PLAF TO OBSERVE 4-DAY TET TRUCE

Giai Phong Press Agency made public on Jan. 5, 1970, the decision of the PLAF and an order of the PLAF Command on the suspension of attacks for 4 days during the Tet festival. This decision has been prompted as usual, say the said documents, by the humanitarian policy of the PRG, to allow the people, the members of the puppet administration and army as well as US servicemen and US satellite troops, to enjoy the Lunar new year.

The truce will come into effect from 7 hour February 5 to 7 hours February 9, 1970, local time.

On this occasion, the PRG reaffirms its resolve to continue the present resistance to a finish and calls on the PLAF men to be ready to punish all enemy violations of the truce and provocation.

Military Operations

- ◎ IN ONE NIGHT (Jan. 3) 6 SUB-SECTOR CPs AND 70 MILITARY POSTS IN MY THO PROVINCE STORMED.
- ◎ IN BREACHES OF THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE, 4 PUPPET COMPANIES WIPE OUT OR DECIMATED IN TAY NINH AND TRA VINH PROVINCES.
- ◎ MORE THAN 160 ENEMY TROOPS KNOCKED OUT IN SAIGON AND PERIPHERY.
- ◎ PLAF ATTACKS STEPPED UP IN DA NANG REGION SINCE JANUARY 6.

On Jan. 3, PLAF men attacked again. My Tho province, about 40 km southwest of Saigon, on the Mekong left bank, Giai Phong Press Agency reported. More than 80 military targets and 6 sub-sector CPs were hit; with the losses suffered on the night of Dec. 27, the total enemy toll ran to over 200 casualties and 17 military vehicles and 4 cannons destroyed.

another one decimated in Tay Ninh province.

In Saigon, on Jan. 4, the patriotic forces put out of commission two US military vehicles in the street and killed the soldiers on board. The guerrillas were also very active in the suburbs of the city, knocking out of action 160 adverse troops between Dec. 5 and 21, 1969.

Western agencies reported that new PLAF assaults had been made on Jan. 5 and 6 south of Da Nang, chiefly near Que Son where a US Marine Division 7, US Marine Division 1 sustained "the heaviest losses in one battle since November last." These sources listed 70 GI casualties in this daring coup de main of the PLAF who had slipped at night into the barracks, taking the Yankees completely unawares. On the same night, they added, PLAF gunners pounded at least 37 targets including Da Nang

base, the signal centres at Ban Me Thut and Pleiku (Western High Plateaus).

To give an idea of the patriots' activities in December, Giai Phong Press Agency said that in Biak Chanh and De Ha districts, about 20 km west and southwest of Saigon, 350 enemy troops were disabled, 2 choppers downed, 2 vehicles, 7 cannons and an anti-aircraft depot destroyed in that month. In the same month, in Bao Tra, a province on an arm of the Mekong south-southwest of Saigon, 2,850 adverse forces were wiped out, 5 aircraft grounded, 7 vehicles destroyed, 100 houses destroyed and 2 vessels sunk. In the two northernmost provinces, northwest of Hiep, the enemy losses were 560 casualties, 7 planes downed, 200 vehicles destroyed and 10 vessels sunk.

In the same period, the general strike started on the morning of January 7, 1970, as scheduled by the TUs with the participation of one hundred per cent of workers in the following enterprises as reported by AFP workers: Shell Esso and Caltex filling stations, rice port in Cholon, workers of the sugar refinery at Khanh Hoi and of the pharmaceutical product fac-

SITUATION IN SAIGON

► GENERAL STRIKE

RECENTLY, workers of 118 TU organisations in Saigon decided to stage a general strike in support of the action of the bus drivers for employment, pay and promotion, reported. Since July 1969, the Saigon administration's closure of the State-run bus enterprise has left three million passengers without any public transport system and 400 out of 500 workers of the bus enterprise jobless. According to AFP, the strike was also to show the discontent of the people, first of all workers and toiling people, a strike spiraling as a result of the tax increase decreed by the Saigon puppet administration in October last.

The general strike started on the morning of January 7, 1970, as scheduled by the TUs with the participation of one hundred per cent of workers in the following enterprises as reported by AFP workers: Shell Esso and Caltex filling stations, rice port in Cholon,

workers of the sugar refinery at Khanh Hoi and of the pharmaceutical product fac-

► STUDENTS AGAINST PRESSGANGING AND TERROR

A

S already known, the

Saigon puppet administration arrested 15 leaders of the students' movement in Saigon at the end of December on the grounds that they had participated in the "Christmas Concert for Peace in Viet Nam." This act was strongly criticized by public opinion, chiefly by a good university students in Saigon. Because of public pressure, the puppet authorities released 14 students except Nguyen Van Thang, Secretary-General of the General Association of

Students. The Association then launched a new protest campaign with marathon teach-ins, school strikes and hunger strikes. This led to the students in the US a message calling for their support. This persevering action resulted in the release of Nguyen Van Thang on Jan. 1, 1970.

Meanwhile the students of the Science Faculty of the Saigon University protested against the impressment of 64 professors and

(Continued page 73)